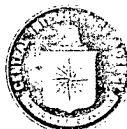


Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

7 July 1987

Significance of Recent Soviet Proposals to Discuss  
Military DoctrineSummary

The Warsaw Pact has proposed discussions with NATO on military doctrine, which the Soviets define as the views of a state on the conduct of war. It is a long-standing Soviet position that their doctrine is inherently defensive because of its proletarian roots, and that Western doctrine is aggressive and a reflection of the West's imperialist policies. The Soviets would try to exploit any formal East-West discussions of doctrinal issues by emphasizing this purported contrast. [redacted]

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The proposal to have discussions on doctrine is but the latest attempt by the Warsaw Pact to engage the NATO states in a direct alliance-to-alliance exchange to advance their arms control agenda. It was coupled with another restatement of the Soviet claim that--despite asymmetries in certain areas--overall military parity exists between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the proposal that each alliance reduce those forces in which it does have superiority. [redacted]

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On 29 May, the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization issued a public statement regarding military doctrine. The declaration claimed that Pact doctrine is defensive and is based on the principle of maintaining sufficient military forces to repel aggression. Further, it proposed

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This memorandum was prepared in the Office of Soviet Analysis [redacted] Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to Chief, European Assessments Division, [redacted]  
[redacted]

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consultations with NATO to compare the military doctrines of the two alliances as a means of reducing mutual distrust and the level of forces on each side. The following paragraphs define the Soviet concept of military doctrine, and explain why Soviet leaders consider it an important issue.<sup>1</sup> [redacted]

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The Soviets have traditionally maintained that the military doctrine of any nation is determined by its political system and by the level of its technological and industrial development. In Soviet writings, military doctrine has a "class nature" that is determined by the "essence and character" of the ruling social class. The Soviets characterize Western doctrine as threatening because, by their definition, it reflects aggressive, hegemonistic policies carried out by capitalist states. They maintain that their own doctrine, unlike that of NATO, is naturally defensive, and they consistently project that, should war occur, it will be forced on the USSR by the aggressive tendencies of the imperialist West. [redacted]

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The recent Pact proposal on doctrine is part of an on-going campaign to engage NATO in a direct exchange on military-related matters. [redacted] The Pact included a brief description of its doctrine in the Budapest Appeal of June 1986, in which the Pact proposed major, mutual, and equal reductions of Pact and NATO conventional ground and air forces. Later in 1986, the Pact proposed direct discussions between the NATO and Warsaw Pact commanders and direct discussions between NATO's High-Level Task Force (dealing with conventional forces) and an allegedly similar Pact group. The Soviets and their allies also claim there is overall military parity between the two alliances, but recently they have acknowledged that certain asymmetries exist between "certain categories of armament and armed forces." The Pact's proposal is that these asymmetries be eliminated by a reduction by that side that has an advantage. Thus, the Soviets hope to persuade the West to reduce those portions of NATO theater forces the Soviets find most troublesome--especially strike aircraft--and to gain political capital with Western publics and parliaments by avowing the USSR's benign intentions. [redacted]

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix for a detailed discussion of Soviet military doctrine. [redacted]

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The portrayal of Soviet and Pact military doctrine as defensive and "peaceful" can also be seen as generally consistent with recent Soviet interest in having themselves regarded as non-threatening, and also as offering new alternatives to military issues. Such an approach is likely to be well received in a broad range of European circles. This could lead to increased pressure on NATO to modify its "flexible response" doctrine and particularly to abandon its provision for NATO's initiation of nuclear warfare. Similarly, it could provide a basis for criticizing such developing NATO strategies as "Follow-on Forces Attack" and Air-Land Battle, which are intended to interdict the wartime movement of Pact forces from the rear area into Central Europe. [REDACTED]

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Should discussions occur, the Soviets' domination of the Warsaw Pact would afford them considerable advantages in dealing with NATO on doctrinal issues. With the exception of Romania, none of the East European Pact states has an independent national military doctrine; "Pact" military doctrine, in fact, is Soviet military doctrine. Thus, the Soviets could benefit from a unified position while NATO would have to reconcile multiple national policies and traditions. [REDACTED]

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## Appendix

Soviet military doctrine (voyennaya doktrina) is the official state view of the USSR on the nature of war. According to authoritative Soviet writings, it defines the structure of the armed forces, identifies likely opponents in a war, and governs the preparation of the nation for war and the use of the armed forces in battle. It has two elements--the sociopolitical and military-technical. The first establishes the Marxist-Leninist context in which warfare occurs, and developing its content is the responsibility of the Soviet political leadership. The second directs the planning and conduct of military operations, and it is primarily the responsibility of the Soviet General Staff. All doctrine is approved by the highest Soviet civilian and military command authorities--in peacetime, the Politburo and the Collegium of the Ministry of Defense--giving it the status of state policy.

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The sociopolitical element of military doctrine is contained in official CPSU documents such as the new party program adopted in 1986, and is always defined by Soviet political leaders. Because it is founded in Marxist-Leninist theory, it is considered generally stable and deterministic. It is meant to guide military policy at the broadest level, on issues such as what resources will be allocated to the military in war. As such, it differs fundamentally from concepts of military doctrine usually employed in the West, which focus on combat operations. Also, since it is rooted in Marxist-Leninist concepts, it is imbued with a political authority absent in Western military doctrines.

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The military-technical elements of doctrine are contained in Soviet military regulations, which provide the basis for operations plans, combat orders, the texts used at military academies and schools, and other official military documents and publications. This element of doctrine is more dynamic than the other, changing as the weapons, equipment and other concepts used to wage war change. The General Staff revises the regulations, which are classified documents carrying the force of law, in accordance with these changes. The military-technical element guides the training of Soviet military forces, and its tenets

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are reflected in the conduct of military exercises. The Soviets openly acknowledge that the military-technical element of their doctrine stresses the offensive use of force. In 1985, Marshal Ogarkov noted that in future war, "primarily offensive forms of battle will predominate," and that "Soviet military doctrine requires not merely defending ourselves," but also the ability to inflict upon an opponent "crushing retaliatory strikes and to destroy him in any situation." [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Significance of Recent Soviet Proposals to Discuss  
Military Doctrine

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